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Title: Need to implement the Right to Information Act as per envisaged guidelines.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (DURGAPUR): The Indian Right to Information Act was introduced to the Indian Parliament in July 2000. It came into effect on 12 October, 2005. Under this law the information has become a fundamental right of the citizen. Under this law all Government Bodies or Government funded agencies have to designate a Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO's responsibility is to ensure that information requested is disclosed to the petitioner within 30 days or within 48 hours in case of information concerning the life and liberty of a person.

A number of high profile disclosures revealed scams in Public Distribution Systems (ration stores), disaster relief, construction of highways etc. The law itself has been hailed as a landmark in India's drive towards more openness and accountability.

However the RTI India has certain weaknesses that hamper implementation. The lack of a central PIO makes it difficult to pinpoint the correct PIO to approach for requests. In the state of Maharashtra it was estimated that only 30% of the requests are actually realized under the Maharashtra Right to Information Act. The law also bars disclosure of information that affects national security, defence, and other matters that are deemed of national interest.

Therefore I, urge upon the government to implement the RTI Act as per set guidelines.